SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING & MINDFULNESS (AGES 5-10)

FEELINGS & FRIENDSHIPS

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL JOURNAL

Help Children Name Big Feelings & Cultivate Empathy Through Story Characters

THIS EMOTIONAL EXPLORATION JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

Explorer Name: _____

My Current Age / Grade: _____

My Favorite Safe Reading Space: _____

Special Grown-Up Co-Reader: _____

OUR FAMILY'S EMOTIONAL SAFETY PROMISE

"All feelings are welcome here: happy, worried, angry, peaceful, and sad."

"Feelings are never bad or wrong. They are messages our body sends us."

"When feelings feel too big, we pause, breathe, talk, and help each other."

"We use book characters as gentle mirrors to understand ourselves and others."

Developed in alignment with Dr. Dan Siegel's 'Name It to Tame It' Principle

The Animal Feelings Wheel

Kid-friendly emotional archetypes to label and normalize feelings

Neuroscience Tip: When children name an emotion, prefrontal cortex activity calms the amygdala. Use these animal friends to identify how characters (and ki

HAPPY BEAR

Core Emotion: Joyful, Warm, Content

What it feels like:

Smiling, heart feels light, ready to share smiles

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

WORRIED WHALE

Core Emotion: Anxious, Overwhelmed

What it feels like:

Butterflies in stomach, heavy deep waters, needs reassurance

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

ANGRY FOX

Core Emotion: Frustrated, Impatient

What it feels like:

Jaw tight, fists clenched, feeling treated unfairly

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

BRAVE LION

Core Emotion: Courageous, Determined

What it feels like:

Heart beating fast but trying anyway, standing up tall

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

CALM OWL

Core Emotion: Peaceful, Thoughtful

What it feels like:

Quiet breathing, listening carefully, rested mind

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

SAD PUPPY

Core Emotion: Disappointed, Lonely

What it feels like:

Tears, heavy shoulders, wanting a soft cuddle or blanket

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

PROUD GIRAFFE

Core Emotion: Accomplished, Confident

What it feels like:

Standing tall after working hard, celebrating a win

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

EXCITED MONKEY

Core Emotion: Eager, Full of Energy

What it feels like:

Bouncing, talking fast, eager for what comes next

[ ] Character felt this tonight [ ] I felt this today

Empathy Prompts & Character Mirrors

Questions that connect book events to your child's real social world

1. IMPULSE CONTROL & PATIENCE

"When Fox got impatient in tonight's story, what helped him wait?"

Talk about times we feel in a huge hurry. What can our hands and body do while we wait?

2. NORMALIZING ANXIETY & WORRY

"Have you ever felt a small worry grow big like Whale's tide?"

What helped Whale feel anchored? What helps you feel safe when a worry pops up?

3. COMPASSION & RECOVERY FROM MISTAKES

"What kind words can we give someone who made an honest mistake?"

Characters make mistakes in every great book. How did their friends react?

4. EVERYDAY BRAVERY & COURAGE

"Draw or write what bravery looked like in tonight's chapter."

Bravery is rarely fighting dragons—it is asking for help, saying hello to someone new, or trying again.

My Calming Strategy Toolkit

Self-regulation tools for when feelings feel too big

STRATEGY 1: THE 3 WHALE BREATHS

Deep Belly Breathing to Slow Down the Nervous System

1. Place one hand on your tummy like a whale floating on the calm sea.
2. Breathe in deeply through your nose for 4 seconds — feel tummy rise.
3. Exhale slowly out your mouth like a gentle whale spout for 5 seconds.
4. Repeat 3 times until your shoulders drop and muscles relax.

STRATEGY 2: THE OWL 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING SPRAY

Mindfulness Observation to Bring Racing Thoughts Home

5 Things you can see around your bedroom right now.

4 Things you can physically touch (pillow, pyjamas, soft blanket).

3 Sounds you can hear (clock ticking, evening breeze, parent's breath).

2 Scents you can smell (cozy pajamas, evening air, favorite book).

1 Kind thought about yourself: 'I am safe. I am loved.'

STRATEGY 3: DOODLE THE VOLCANO (RELEASE BOX)

Expressing Big Anger or Overwhelm Through Art

Scratch, scribble, or press colors hard into this box when words are too hard.

Anger is energy in your hands. Putting it on paper lets it out safely.

(Doodle, draw squiggles, or sketch your calm place inside this box)

Nightly Social-Emotional Reflection Page

Print this sheet for bedtime story reflections (Print as many copies as needed!)

TONIGHT'S STORY:

Book Title & Author: _____

Date: _____ Main Character: _____

1. WHAT ANIMAL FEELING DID THE MAIN CHARACTER EXPERIENCE?

[ ] Happy Bear [ ] Worried Whale [ ] Angry Fox [ ] Brave Lion

[ ] Calm Owl [ ] Sad Puppy [ ] Proud Giraffe [ ] Excited Monkey

Why did they feel this way in the story?

2. MY PERSONAL FEELINGS BRIDGE

"Have you ever felt something similar to what happened in this book?"

3. EMPATHY & CALMING STRATEGY

How did the character resolve their problem or find calm?

What is one calming strategy we will remember for tomorrow?

PARENT'S 1-LINE HEART NOTE (Something insightful or sweet your child said tonight):

The Friendship Repair & Kindness Guide

Social scripts for apologizing, resolving conflict, and being a loyal friend

THE 4-PART SINCERE APOLOGY (HOW TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT)

Part 1: Name What Happened

"I am sorry for taking your book without asking."

Part 2: Acknowledge Their Feeling

"I know that made you feel frustrated and upset."

Part 3: Make It Right

"Here is your book back, and can I help you find your page?"

Part 4: Future Plan

"Next time I will ask first and wait for your answer."

KIND WORDS PHRASE BANK (FOR HOME, SCHOOL & PLAYGROUND)

WHEN SOMEONE IS SAD OR HURT:

* "I see you're feeling down. Would you like to sit together?"
* "You don't have to talk right now, but I am right here."
* "That sounded really hard. I believe you."

WHEN YOU WANT TO JOIN PLAY:

* "That game looks super fun! Can I be the helper / co-pilot?"
* "Would you like to build together or take turns?"

WHEN YOU DISAGREE WITHOUT SHOUTING:

* "I see it a different way. Can I share my idea?"
* "Let's do your way for 5 minutes, then my way!"
* "I feel upset right now. I need 2 minutes to cool down."

OFFICIAL CITATION OF EMPATHY & CHARACTER

CERTIFICATE OF EMOTIONAL BRAVERY

Presented with immense love and pride to:

(Name of Young Empathy Champion)

for displaying exceptional courage by naming big feelings, practicing calm breaths,

and showing genuine kindness and empathy toward friends, family, and story characters.

You have proven that having big feelings is part of being human,

and that using gentle words makes our entire world brighter.



Date Awarded

Parent / Teacher Signature